

## Claims:

## 1. A sampling apparatus comprising

(A01) a frame fixed at a prescribed position relative to the object lens of an optical microscope,

(A02) a moving member supported with said fixed frame so as to be reciprocatably movable between a sampling position and a waiting position,

(A03) a member for holding said moving member at the waiting position,

(A04) a device for adjusting the position of a sampling needle relative to said moving member so that the tip of said sampling needle is situated at the focus position of the object lens of said optical microscope in the state wherein said moving member was moved to the sampling position, and

(A05) means for fixing said sampling needle to said moving member in the state wherein the position of said sampling needle relative to said moving member was adjusted so that the tip of said sampling needle is situated at the focus position of the object lens of said optical microscope.

## 2. The sampling apparatus according to claim 1 wherein

(A06) said member for holding said moving member at the waiting position is composed of an elastic member which acts on said moving member so as to hold said member always at the waiting position and to make the movement of said moving member to said sampling position possible at the time when external force was applied to said moving member so as to move said member to said sampling position.

3. The sampling apparatus according to claim 1 or 2 wherein  
(A07) said fixed frame is constructed so as to be attachable  
to and detachable from a mirror cylinder which supports the  
object lens of said optical microscope.

4. A sampling method comprising conducting the following steps  
(B01) to (B03) in order:

(B01) a sample moving step in which the surface on which a  
sample is attached is moved so that said sample is moved to the  
focus position of the object lens of an optical microscope,

(B02) a needle moving step in which a moving member, which  
supports a sampling needle and is moved integrately with the  
sampling needle, is moved from a waiting position where the  
position of the tip of the sampling needle is apart from the  
focus position of the object lens of an optical microscope to a  
sampling position where the tip of the sampling needle is  
situated at the focus position of the object lens of said  
optical microscope, and

(B03) a sampling step in which a sample caught on the tip of  
the sampling needle is taken away from the surface on which the  
sample is attached and then collected,

by using a sampling apparatus in which a moving member,  
which supports a sampling needle and is moved integrately with  
the sampling needle, is adjusted so as to be reciprocatably  
movable between a waiting position where the position of the tip  
of the sampling needle is apart from the focus position of the  
object lens of an optical microscope and a sampling position  
where the tip of the sampling needle is situated at the focus

position of the object lens of said optical microscope.